

—but is the result of a principle in us deep and lasting as man—far-reaching as the Eternal God. And the Church is the natural product of that natural Religion. The religious emotion struggles to express itself—the religious idea breaks out in some thing or some manner of speech—the element of worship demands the building of a house, or the consecration of some plot of ground—the consciousness of sin compels an altar and a sacrifice—the feelings of unity common in the breasts of many; a sense of brotherhood, and community of interest demands that they rally round one centre, animated by one hope, holding one faith, and driven by one impulse—and so you have the Church with its two-fold aspect, the one Godward, the other Manward. By the Church, now I mean the forms which Religion assumes to us, or the mode of worship we adopt. The doctrines of Religion go to make up what is called Theology—the practice of Religion is morality, or righteousness—and people may hold the doctrines and not be church-goers—and may practice Religion and not be church-goers—and, on the other hand, people may and do go to church without holding the doctrines or practicing the principles of Religion. And it seems strange that it should be so, for it seems natural that man should respond to that which is natural in him; should move in obedience to the emotions of religion, and go to church in obedience to his instinct of worship. But so it is not. Many have been banished from them the sense of God, and so have no desire to worship, the object being gone; and others who have still a sense of God will not go to the church to put themselves under a form, or to find help in a ritual. Why? The answer would be short and easy if we adopted the method of most theologians—that is—put all the fault upon that poor victim to his wife, and every age of sinners since then—Adam. To find the cause there and the inevitable effect in ourselves would be easy enough; but then most of us know that we, and not Adam, will be held responsible for our right or wrong doing. So I want to speak of those causes, which are now in operation among the people, keeping them away from church.

And, I would speak first of all of the *very poor*, as forming the major portion of non-church-goers. The masses of our cities, who live in the ill-lighted, ill-drained, and ill-ventilated houses, that are crowded together in our back streets, never attend our services. They have no concern for the Church, and if they had—if they had a sense of their own soul and of sin, they would not enter the majority of our churches from a feeling that they would be out of place. They have a notion that the Church is only the place for those who live tolerably decent lives and dress respectably, and not for the man whose morals and coat are shabby, or may be, is minus of both. They no more think of going to church than they do of going to an art exhibition, or a Governor's reception from a lack of the needful respectability. It is true that many of them are profoundly and painfully ignorant in all matters that pertain to spiritual life, because they are profoundly ignorant of everything that is above the range and reach of the brute; and it is a fact that you must civilize them, and teach them to have some sense of mind and heart, and right and wrong, and manhood, before you can bring them under the influence of spiritual teaching. A part of the fault lies in the poor themselves—for the Church is not so hard and coldly respectable as they imagine; but a part of it is to be laid at our church doors. It has always been that the poor have regarded the Church as a place for the respectable members of society, and for them only. When Christ came the Church was composed of the rich. Prophets had come, and teachers of wisdom, but the appeal had been always to the great and the learned. They had nothing for the hosts of men and women who were poor. Philosophy was for the sects. Religion was hid in mystery the unlearned could not penetrate—it was too subtle for their crude analysis, and too delicate for their rough use. There was not an ancient school that had a doctrine for the poor. There were fair and beautiful speculations, ingenious theories of virtue and strength, but they were for the refined and the educated, and not for the men who toiled in the fields or the vineyards under the hot sun—or watched the sheep on the hillsides, or fished on the stormy lakes; not for the bankrupt men and women, who went about with bodies bent by care, and eyes dulled by years of weeping. And, although Christ came preaching the Gospel to those poor, who were outside of all sects and parties—although he gave a philosophy of life to them which should outshine and outlast all others—and a science of life which, if followed, should lead to salvation—and a truth of God which should fill the heart with a gladdening love, and the mind with a swelling thought, and the conscience with a divine law—although He gave *Himself* to them, worked with the workingmen—was a pauper among the poor—and although every great revolution in the Church, or revival of spiritual life has turned the attention of the Church toward the poor, and drawn from her heart and her lips words of welcome—nay, words of passionate entreaty—there is the dreary, painful fact, that the very poor are as thoroughly banished from our churches as if they lived in the malaria swamps of Africa; a hideous sore upon our body corporate—a maddening perplexity that has come into our life.

Yes, a maddening perplexity, for the Church has always known it, and the Church knows it now. The Roman Catholic Church has always been mindful of the poor, and has been of all Churches the most successful in reaching them with her influences. The Episcopal Church of England made a grand effort—to draw the poor within her pale that she might bless them; but the Episcopal Church gradually drew off into the separate zone of culture and respectability, and her mission character is for the most part gone. The Methodist Church at one time sent great living forces down to awaken and teach the crowds of the poor; but Methodism, too, in England is getting to be respectable. The Congregational Church has tried to reach the poor and gather them in, but has accomplished next to nothing, the very organisation being against it. And the ugly fact remains to trouble us that the poor—and they form the masses of our city population—do not go to church. They regard it as too high for them in the social scale; too cultured, too wealthy, and too respectable as to ideas and habits. That is the reason—I may I propound to you what I conceive to be the remedy for that? We believe all of us that a remedy is needful, because we all of us believe in the utility of the church; we believe it to be a great educator—the friend of correct morals—of all that is good and beautiful in human life. We believe that the church is needful to the well being of general society, and of particular individuals; that it is calculated to help them in their endeavours after the true and complete manhood. I am not discussing the merits of any particular church,

but am speaking of simple church-going; it must be a benefit in less or greater degree. And we want the poor to partake of all the benefits church-going can give; but they will not. How shall we induce them? "Bring the church down to the people," is the common answer. "Go to them, not with scientific treatises or philosophical discussions, with learned language or poetic phrase; but with the simple gospel of peace and salvation: make no human effort, leave it all to God." Now that is very fine in theory, for it looks simple, and looks as if those who say it have a wonderful faith in God; but in practice the thing is worth very little. I have always found that those who talk so much about the simple gospel are the very men who use most frequently bewildering technical phrases in theology. The men who are most scornful of human wisdom are the men most given to showing off how much of that same wisdom they possess. And efforts have been made to bring the church down to the very poor. Christ was a workingman—was a poor man—preached his glorious gospel to the poor; His disciples were poor men; the first founders of the church were poor men—*poor*, but men of intelligence, of developed conscience. In them all a previous work had been done. The church remained upon the plane of intelligence. Methodism tried to dig under the level, and produced—superstition; a religion that had no ideas to govern it, no reason to balance it, and so it ran off into fanaticism. When Moody and Sankey began their work in England it was said, "Now the church will put away her formalism and her respectability, and the poor will flock to hear the gospel." But nothing of the kind happened. Respectability? Take every cushion out of every pew; take down the door of it; let all who come here be charged to dress plainly; let me stand and preach in ordinary dress; and do you think the people of whom I am speaking will come and continue to come? I do not. There is nothing here to keep the poor people away. They would be welcomed gladly to any church in the city. The fault is not in the church at all; it is in them, the people. And this gulf must be bridged from this side; not that the church may go to them, but that they may come to it. The foolish and injudicious sneers of some of our preachers at human efforts after civilising the people notwithstanding, it is a fact that we can only give religious impressions where there is some intellectual life to receive and hold them. The most successful missionaries to the heathen have been the men who went to work to civilise the people first, and to give them at least the rudiments of education. As well sow seed upon the flinty rock and look for a harvest, as preach the religion of Christ, the religion of justice and love, to the ignorant and barbarous, and look for justice and love from them. These people around you are savages in a civilised community. Make the drunkard sober, and then—he will go to your church. Some of them are totally ignorant; they have not been informed as to the value of the mind that is in them; they do not know that they are possessed of a mind; they know nothing of the past—care nothing for the present, but just to live in it—and have not even a dream of the future. Remove the ignorance, and then religion may enter. To bring about revivals is good; to establish mission churches in the midst of the dense non-church-going population is a good thing; but—you must do more if you are going to remove this barrier between the church and the masses of the poor; you must see that educational institutions are established and efficiently and zealously worked; you must see that the state, or the corporation, does its work; you must stand between the children and their brutal parents who would deny them all education; you must insist upon good clean streets, and good light, and good drainage; you must effectually protest against this demoralising overcrowding that goes on; you must thunder and lighten against the incompetency, or corruption, that by license lines the streets with those synagogues of the devil where men and women drink in madness and death. Instead of scoffing at human wisdom and human instrumentalities, I am sure it would be better if we took this work in hand with sober sense and no lack of zeal. We must not take Christianity down to mingle with their ignorance and superstition, but lift them up that they may have habits of thought, that they may have and entertain ideas, that they may be moved by true and tender emotions; so will the gospel come to men and women, and not to mere animals incapable of receiving it. The man sowed his seed, but some fell upon the rock, and *that* seed and the time he spent in sowing it were wasted. Better had he sown with more care, then all of it would have borne fruit. Sow the seed of faith, and hope, and love—of gospel truth and liberty—of holiness and heaven; but—first prepare the ground, I beseech you, that your labour may not be in vain in the Lord.

Now, I am going to notice a very different class of non-church-goers, and you will see that I have taken a long stride to get up to them. I ask you to forsake the crowded, unhealthy streets, and forget the poor ignorant people who live there, to contemplate a class of people who may be described as those who *dine late*. The names of numbers will crowd upon your memory at once—people who get up too late to attend a morning service, and take their dinner at the time of evening service. I find a great deal more of that here in Canada than I did in England. There—and still more in Scotland—the domestic arrangements are made to suit the services of the church, and until you get up into the sacred ranks of aristocracy, the people as a rule will dine in time to go to church. But here we differ somewhat, especially the young men who like to dine on Sunday together, perhaps at the club. Of course they are under a peculiar set of circumstances here—they are rich enough to move in the first circles, although they can command but a small income; and they are wise enough to move among the most intellectual, though not very well learned in things ancient and modern. There is a feeling abroad among a certain class of young men that church-going is rather a poor business—old-fashioned—tame—very well for those who are blasé—very well for the heads of families, but not at all the thing for fine dashing young men. So on Sunday evening they carry their clever, refined personalities off to the club, and are amused as they watch the sober crowd pass on their way to religious service. Now, I confess I have much sympathy with the poor workingman—who, shut up in some factory from early morning till late at night six days in the week, goes off by the river or into the fields on Sunday, turning his back upon the church—for he has need of the fresh air and the freedom; but I have no sympathy, only contempt, for the people I am describing. They have plenty of leisure all the week round—they have too much time to spend with their friends, and they do far too much idle and aimless gossip. It is very well to wage war against the